

Frederiks Fort
Fortberg Hill
Coral Bay
St. John
Virgin Islands

HABS No. VI-74

HABS
VI,
2-CORBA,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FREDERIKS FORT

HABS No. VI-74

Location: Fortberg Hill, Coral Bay, St. John, Virgin Island

General Statement:

Architectural character: Frederiks Fort is a ruin of a standard eighteenth century citadel. It is in an extremely poor condition and only the outer walls and the foundation of a structure in the center of the fort remain. There are traces of gun decks over the bastions, steps, and other building features.

Description:

Orientation: The entrance is from the southwest in one of the short curtains of the rectangular fort. The long walls of the rectangle are due northeast-southwest.

Foundations & wall construction: The foundation and walls are rubble masonry with brick lining at the corners, door and window openings. All masonry was plastered originally and traces still remain on all walls. The walls are battered towards the exterior and vertical towards the interior of the fort. They rise from 6' to 8' above the existing level of the interior and from 14' to 22' from the irregular terrain of the exterior.

Openings:

Doorways and Windows: As mentioned above, the sally port is in the south curtain. It is a slightly pointed arch, flanked by two windows or slits, now bricked in. Steps within the fort and outside the sally port make up the difference in the levels of the interior and the exterior. Arcaded window openings are located in the north end of both the east and west curtains. Centered in the north curtain is a large window opening 30" by 5'. No traces remain of the windows and the doors.

Roof shape and covering: Traces remain of flat brick roofs supported on wood beams over the corner bastions and of a continuous walk along the top of the curtain walls connecting the bastions. The walks appear to have been constructed in wood. Both walks and the brick decks above the bastions were 2' to 3' lower than the top of the outer wall which served as breastwalls.

Floor plan: The rooms within the bastions on the court level can be traced in outline only. Except for plaster fragments on the outer walls, no finishes remain. In the south and west bastion, there is evidence of subdivision into two and three cells respectively.

A structure was built against the northeast curtain wall on the court side. Only sections of its foundations are above ground and its size and nature has not been determined.

The structure in the center of the fort mentioned in the general statement was built on a masonry platform raised 4' above the present level of the court. The structure was rectangular and measured 18' x 30'. It was entered at the center of the short southwest side by a series of steps which still exist. It had rubble masonry walls 2' thick to the level of the window sills. From imprints in the masonry, it is apparent that above the window sills the walls were of a half timber construction.

Stairways: In addition to the steps mentioned above in connection with the sally port and the structure in the center of the fort, there are remains of a staircase against the southeast curtain wall at its junction with the south bastion. The staircase connected the court level with the walk along the top of the curtain walls and the gun decks over the bastions. It is constructed in brick and supported on brick arches. A small enclosed vaulted cell is located under the top landing of the staircase.

Floors: Except for fragments of brick pavements at the sally port, no evidence of former floor finishes have been found.

There is no evidence of the doors, windows, trim, hardware or ceiling finishes of the rooms within the bastions or of the structures within the court.

Site: The fort is located on the summit of a conical hill on a small peninsula between Coral Bay and Hurricane Hole in Coral Bay. Its position commands all of Coral Bay and the adjoining shoreline as well as the entrance to the bay.

Foundations of an unidentified structure are situated 50 feet west of the fort and a supporting shore battery is located on a promontory facing the entrance to Coral Bay approximately 1,000' southeast of the fort.

F. C. Gjessing
November 1960